



Question: 82 QUESTION ON NOTICE — Ms Sandell to ask the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing —
What action is the Government taking in relation to the previous Coalition Government's policy to transfer 12,000 public housing units to the community sector.

Answer:

The Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing: I can advise that:

- The Victorian Government believes that all Victorians have a right to secure, affordable and appropriate housing, and reliable and accessible services. A strong and sustainable social housing sector is critical to ensuring that all Victorians can own or rent housing that meets their needs.
- The community housing sector has an important role to play in improving and expanding housing assistance to disadvantaged groups, and we are committed to promoting and expanding not-for-profit, community-based housing associations.
- The Government is keen to examine the different options to expand the sector's role and the kinds of benefits this could deliver for tenants, for asset improvement, and for local area renewal and local services.

Attachments: No Attachments

Answer Published Date: 18/03/2015

Question: 83 CONSTITUENCY QUESTION — Mr Clark to ask the Minister for Education —
My question is to the Minister for Education. I refer the minister to Koonung Secondary College, to which the coalition government allocated \$8.8 million for a much-needed upgrade after Labor failed to find an upgrade for the school when last in office, and I ask: will the government proceed with this vital upgrade for Koonung Secondary College?

Answer: Thank you for your question regarding Koonung Secondary College.
Investment in education and school infrastructure is a priority for the Victorian Government and we are committed to spending \$530 million on school facilities during the period 2015 - 2018. This investment will build on the existing school capital works program. Our challenge is to responsibly balance and prioritise the needs of over 1,500 government schools in Victoria, all in varying condition.
You may be aware that Koonung Secondary College was allocated \$1.2 million for capital works in the 2014-15 State Budget. This project will enable the college to further improve and modernise its facilities.
The Department will work closely with the Koonung Secondary College to deliver its capital project, helping to ensure the best outcome for the college and local community.

Attachments: No Attachments

Answer Published Date: 14/04/2015

Question: 84 CONSTITUENCY QUESTION — Ms Blandthorn to ask the Minister for Public Transport —
My question is to the Minister for Public Transport. Labor identified the railway crossing at Glenroy Road, Glenroy, as one of the 50 worst level crossings in Victoria. Indeed the RACV identified it as one of Victoria's most dangerous and advocated for its urgent removal. This is not news to the local community, who have long worn its cost to local productivity and suffered the dangerous implications of its setting.

This crossing cuts across Glenroy Road just before Pascoe Vale Road. The vicinity includes a busy bus interchange and a vibrant shopping precinct. It is a major thoroughfare for anyone travelling from east to west across the northern part of the Pascoe Vale district. Thousands of cars travel this route every day. As the railway line carries both metropolitan and regional services, the boom gates are often down. Relentless traffic jams ensue sometimes all the way down Pascoe Vale Road to Oak Park and from Glenroy Road to Hadfield. Traffic jams can go the length of suburbs. The frustration this causes leads people to take silly risks. Twenty one reported safety incidents have occurred at this crossing. Labor committed to the removal of this crossing, and I ask the minister to provide an update for the community regarding this project.

Answer: Over the next eight years, the Victorian Government will remove 50 of the most dangerous and congested level crossings in Melbourne. This significant program is a

key step to transforming our public transport system into an international-style metro, while removing congestion on our road network.

As you noted, the Glenroy Road level crossing will be removed by 2022 as well as the Buckley Street level crossing which is also on the Craigieburn line, and the nearby Bell Street level crossing in Coburg. This will provide significant benefit to the respective communities by reducing congestion, allowing additional train services and improving safety.

To facilitate the level crossing removals, the Government has brought forward funding of \$100 million to establish the Level Crossing Removal Authority. The Authority is developing a strategic plan for the efficient removal of the 50 level crossings, including optimal planning, procurement and construction methods and best practice community and stakeholder engagement.

Hon Jacinta Allan MP

Minister for Public Transport

Attachments: No Attachments

Answer Published Date: 06/05/2015

Question: 85 CONSTITUENCY QUESTION — Dr Napthine to ask the Minister for Health —
My constituency question is for the Minister for Health. I note that the coalition budget for the financial year 2014-15 provided record funding of \$14.9 billion for Victorian hospitals and health services. This meant that public aged-care services and hospitals across my electorate of South-West Coast received record levels of funding to meet the increasing health needs of our ageing and growing population. However, this funding did not include any provision for the additional penalty rate costs associated with the Labor government's decision to declare Easter Sunday a public holiday. I ask: given the government's commitment to penalty rates, will the government guarantee to provide the full amount of the additional funding required by public hospitals and aged-care services in my electorate to meet the additional costs of higher penalty rates as a direct result of the government's decision to declare Easter Sunday a public holiday?

Answer: The Minister for Health: I am informed that:
Commencing this year, Easter Sunday and Grand Final Friday will be declared public holidays. Preparation of a Regulatory Impact Statement - which includes a community engagement period - is currently underway for these public holidays, and will be completed prior to Grand Final Friday 2015. The Statement will provide quantitative and qualitative analysis of the benefits and costs of the two new public holidays.
Employees who are required to work on Easter Sunday will benefit from an increased penalty rate, rising from the ordinary Sunday rate to a public holiday penalty rate.
I can understand the Member's concern for the financial sustainability of health services and the system more widely given the \$1 billion in cuts sustained by the health budget over the past four years.
I can also confirm the Member's statement that the government supports the retention of appropriate penalty rates in the state of Victoria and that this remains government policy, despite the moves of some, namely his Liberal colleagues in Canberra and perhaps closer to home, to remove them from agreements and workplace arrangements.
I can assure the Member that any additional funding required to support public health and aged care services to meet the costs of these additional public holidays is subject to the Government's consideration during the 2015-16 Budget process.
The Easter Sunday public holiday will be introduced via a notice in the Government Gazette, allowing Victorian businesses to put in place their trading arrangements and to organise employee rosters.

Attachments: No Attachments

Answer Published Date: 16/03/2015

Question: 86 CONSTITUENCY QUESTION — Ms Ward to ask the Minister for Education for the Minister for Training and Skills — My constituency question is to the Minister for Training and Skills. Can the minister provide information on how the government's \$4 million investment, fast-tracked from the \$320 million TAFE Rescue Fund, will benefit the Melbourne Polytechnic community in my electorate of Eltham? The Greensborough campus of Melbourne Polytechnic, which was formerly the Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE, in my electorate of Eltham was shamefully closed under the Napthine Liberal government. As a result of the former government's cuts, the number of government-funded students at Melbourne Polytechnic declined by 27 per cent between 2011 and 2014. These cuts not hurt only students but also their families, their parents, their communities, women returning to work and local businesses. I welcome the quick action by the Minister for Training and Skills in fast-tracking \$4 million for Melbourne Polytechnic from the \$320 million TAFE Rescue Fund and ask the

minister to outline the benefits this will provide Melbourne Polytechnic, its students and the local community.

Answer:

The Government's \$320 million TAFE Rescue Fund is already flowing to TAFEs in need. Seven TAFE institutes have already received a share in the first \$20 million of the TAFE Rescue Fund.

The fast-tracked TAFE Rescue Fund grant will help TAFEs in financial turmoil to stay afloat, so they can retain staff and improve training, courses and job opportunities for students.

The Government has also committed \$10 million to re-open Melbourne Polytechnic's Greensborough campus. Discussions are underway with Melbourne Polytechnic.

Attachments: No Attachments

Answer Published Date: 26/03/2015

Question: 87 CONSTITUENCY QUESTION — Mrs Fyffe to ask the Minister for Mental Health — My constituency question is to the Minister for Mental Health. I refer to the fact that during the time of the Napthine coalition government 54 synthetic drugs were banned under the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981. However, every day new synthetic forms of drugs such as synthetic marijuana are appearing and being sold through various retail outlets in the Yarra Ranges. I am told that synthetic marijuana is highly addictive and that it is being sold through shops such as sex shops. It is sold as tea, potpourri, incense et cetera and often carries the instruction 'Not for smoking'. The chemical composition changes frequently, with businesses having backup compositions ready to sell. Not only are these drugs addictive and have an impact on the user's thought processes and motivation but with long-term use they can damage the organs of the body. Does the government have any plans at all to ensure that all forms of synthetic drugs are banned, given my constituents' current concerns about the impact of drugs on our society?

Answer: Under the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981, substances found to be an analogue (intended to be synthetic version) of any illegal drug are already banned. As additional legislative coverage, Schedule 11 of the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981, also now lists an extensive range of specific cannabinoids that have caused harm to people who used them. If you have any information about the display or sale of synthetic drugs, or illegal drug analogues, I suggest you contact Victoria Police. If you have any information about the misleading labelling of products being sold, I suggest you contact Consumer Affairs.

Attachments: No Attachments

Answer Published Date: 23/04/2015

Question: 88 CONSTITUENCY QUESTION — Ms Thomas to ask the Minister for Planning — My constituency question is directed to the Minister for Planning. As the minister knows full well, the previous government implemented an arbitrary no-go zone banning wind farms of all shapes and sizes in the Macedon Ranges. This ban paid no heed to science, no heed to evidence, no heed to the job-creating opportunities that renewable energy presents and no heed to the wishes of local communities within my electorate. The Andrews Labor government's pre-election commitment to lift the ban and enable proposals for community wind farms in the Macedon Ranges to be assessed on their merits was therefore greeted enthusiastically in my electorate, particularly by the passionate and committed members of the Macedon Ranges Sustainability Group. I ask the minister to provide me with advice and a timeline for the delivery of this commitment.

Answer: Minister for Planning - I am informed that, as at the date the question was raised: The Victorian Government is committed to reinvigorating the wind energy industry to promote renewable energy investment, support jobs and open the doors for community wind farms in the Macedon Ranges. I have asked the Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning to provide advice on how to best facilitate community wind farms in the planning system, including consultation with key stakeholders. I will consider this matter in due course and advise Ms Thomas, Member for Macedon, of my decision and a timeline for the delivery of this commitment accordingly.

Attachments: No Attachments

Answer Published Date: 13/04/2015

Question: 89 CONSTITUENCY QUESTION — Ms Sheed to ask the Minister for Public Transport —

My constituency question is to the Minister for Public Transport. Shepparton currently has 4 passenger rail services to and from Melbourne each weekday, while Bendigo has 18 services to Melbourne and 21 back to Bendigo. A survey released last year found residents are, and I quote, 'extremely dissatisfied with the city's passenger rail services to and from Melbourne'. Can the minister advise what steps are being taken to engage the residents of the Shepparton district in the draft regional network development plan consultation process to provide a blueprint for an improvement in passenger rail services in the Shepparton region?

Answer: Minister for Public Transport - I am informed that, as at the date the question was raised: In preparing the Network Development Plan for Regional Victoria, Public Transport Victoria (PTV) will be working closely with communities to understand issues and opportunities in their local areas. Specifically for Shepparton, PTV expects to engage the community and key stakeholders, such as the City of Greater Shepparton through its Make Shepparton Greater campaign, later in 2015.

Attachments: No Attachments

Answer Published Date: 13/04/2015

Question: 90 CONSTITUENCY QUESTION — Ms Kilkenny to ask the Minister for Roads and Road Safety — My constituency question is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. I ask that the minister provide an update on the government's election commitment to duplicate Thompson Road. Thompson Road runs right through my electorate of Carrum. It is an important arterial connection through the region, and many of my constituents use this road every day to drive to work and schools. During the election campaign last year concerns about traffic congestion on this road were raised over and over again by local residents. The bottlenecks along this road are notorious, and travel in both directions is heavily affected during both morning and afternoon peak drive times. Residents, quite rightly, are sick and tired of sitting in bumper-to-bumper traffic - time that could be spent with families or at work. Businesses are also very concerned with traffic delays on Thompson Road, citing safety issues and impacts on productivity. I believe residents and businesses in my electorate would be very keen to participate in and hear about what plans are in place for the proposed duplication of Thompson Road, and I ask the minister if he could provide an update for them.

Answer: Minister for Roads and Road Safety - I am informed that, as at the date the question was raised: At the last State Election, the Government made a commitment to the duplication of Thompsons Road between Frankston-Dandenong Road and Clyde Road. This commitment will upgrade the two remaining unduplicated sections of Thompsons Road between Frankston-Dandenong Road and Clyde Road. I am pleased to advise that a commitment of \$500,000 in funding to fast track planning and preconstruction works for Thompsons Road has already been made and has allowed these works to commence. A business case has been prepared for consideration by Government on the detailed scope, cost and staging options for the duplication. Preconstruction activities including survey, site investigations, design development, utility service investigations and environment studies required for permit approvals, are now underway and are progressing well. A communications strategy is currently under preparation to ensure that the community and various interested stakeholders are informed of progress in the ongoing planning and delivery of this important project.

Attachments: No Attachments

Answer Published Date: 13/04/2015

Question: 91 CONSTITUENCY QUESTION — Mr Crisp to ask the Minister for Health — My constituency question is to the Minister for Health. I refer to a matter raised by Joan Hill, who is a volunteer at the Sunraysia Information & Referral Service, and to the fact that the Victorian patient transport assistance scheme will reimburse the cost of taxi transfers from the airport for medical treatment, and I ask: will the minister extend the reimbursement to chauffeured hire cars to and from Melbourne Airport given that they offer personalised pick-up and delivery, assistance with luggage to the door, assistance with mobility aids and a child's car seat?

Answer: The Minister for Health: I am informed that:

- The Victorian Patient Transport Assistance Scheme does provide the per kilometre fuel subsidy rate if a chauffeured hire car is used as taxi travel.
- Taxi services can also offer personalised pick-up when travelling to the airport. In addition, there is the Multi Purpose Taxi Program and the Wheelchair Accessible Taxis program in metropolitan and regional areas.

Attachments: No Attachments

Answer Published Date: 16/03/2015

Question: 92 CONSTITUENCY QUESTION — Ms Williams to ask the Minister for Multicultural Affairs —
My constituency question is for the Minister for Multicultural Affairs. I ask that the minister provide me with some information about the process that will take place to determine the most appropriate location for the Indian precinct committed to by the Premier prior to last November's election. As I represent the most multicultural electorate in the state, this commitment is of great interest to many in Dandenong. The Indian community is numerically one of the largest ethnic groups in the Greater Dandenong and Casey local government areas. I am sure my neighbouring members would agree that this community is a very important and vibrant part of the multicultural south-east. Traders in Dandenong's Little India are particularly excited about the commitment to an Indian precinct, and they are eager to make the case for the precinct to be located in Dandenong. As such, information from the minister on this matter would be most helpful.

Answer:

The Victorian Government has made a commitment to provide \$500,000 to establish an Indian Cultural Precinct.

The Victorian Government will undertake a thorough consultative process to determine the best location for the precinct. The location will be determined in consultation with an appointed panel, which will include representatives from the Indian community, as well as local government and relevant experts. A feasibility study will also inform the choice of location for the precinct.

The Victorian Government is committed to investing in multicultural infrastructure initiatives that will help promote and support an inclusive and harmonious society.

Attachments: No Attachments

Answer Published Date: 24/03/2015